

LOS ANGELES TIMES

32nd Annual Editorial Awards

March 11, 1994

TRANSCRIPT OF THE 32ND ANNUAL LOS ANGELES TIMES EDITORIAL AWARDS

OPENING REMARKS BY SHELBY COFFEY III, EDITOR AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

COFFEY: This was the year you earned the title masters of disaster. Despite fires and floods, recession and quake, you have given the Los Angeles Times some of the finest high-stress, high-stakes, high-wire journalism in modern times.

And what's more, you've gotten even better at it.

So that when we were all awakened at 4:31 a.m. by the great Northridge quake, we didn't have to be thrown into a panic about how to organize coverage.

In fact, as I started to make phone calls at 4:45, having seen that the family chimney hadn't fallen down, I regarded the situation with what Mark Twain once called "the cool confidence of a Christian holding four aces." You are the aces.

Without phones, without computers, without lights till afternoon—and in the Valley without presses—you still put out a paper of such quality that the next day our new publisher, Dick Schlosberg, decided to resign. He said he couldn't imagine that it got any better than this edition. Luckily, we talked him out of it in a matter of seconds. And he well and truly made things happen in the following days for the extraordinary coverage and superb special sections, such as "The Next Los Angeles."

About that section, Jim Batten, the chairman of Knight-Ridder, wrote, "That is newspapering at its best."

Those and many other words of praise for the paper you put out have also been matched in the past year by a set of prizes you should be proud of. Not just the Pulitzer finalists and Prize. Not just the George Polk Award. Not just the Society of Professional Journalists and the Newspaper Designer's Award. Not just the Photographer of the Year award. Not just The California Newspaper Publishers, which gave us the second straight Overall Excellence award.

The aim as always is not just to garner those prizes—or tonight's—but rather to continue on the course Otis Chandler set us on: to be the best newspaper in this country, in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, until Myrna Oliver and Burt Folkart us do part.

Making high-quality journalism and making budget has been no easy feat these last several years. But I do believe, deep in my heart I do believe, that we've seen the beginning of the end of the California reces-

sion, that better times are on the way that will give us better resources for our great, decisive purpose—to be the wisest and most innovative of major American newspapers.

What we want to be journalistically is the agenda-setter for our readers. Clearly the stories and sections done during the California fires, as after the quake, showed the grace of the paper under pressure and the strengths of the paper under duress.

There we gave:

First, the news—one clear shot at the naked facts.

Second, analysis—the how and why and what next of events.

Third, literary journalism that bound readers to a powerful story.

Fourth, the investigative edge that looks at how institutions say they act compared to the reality.

Fifth, practical journalism that helps people cope with their daily lives.

Sixth, visual journalism, which has the power to freeze extraordinary moments and explain complex subjects.

And seventh, innovation which aims to push the battle for the reader's attention on to new ground.

This past year, innovation did come. In the Valley we relaunched the section with expanded news coverage, with a strong set of new features and a bold new look. In Ventura we split the daily section between East and West Ventura and revamped the Life section. In suburban coverage, seizing on the success of City Times, we moved sections to a tabloid format. And after four years of pushing, first under Frank Sotomayor and now under Sergio Muñoz, *Nuestro Tiempo* became a weekly.

The Travel section was relaunched with an excellent new format. The Voices pages continue to give voice to ideas and people in our communities who ordinarily might not get a chance to appear in a big metropolitan newspaper. Color is now becoming increasingly pervasive and useful thanks to superhuman efforts and a lot of new Macintoshes under the watchful eye of Terry Schwadron. And now the new and improved View section is scheduled for an April launch.

I have mentioned before at these ceremonies a Japanese parable worth remembering: "In a journey of ten thousand steps, a man may come across a blocked path and be blocked seven times. But if he passes on the eighth try, he has conquered the path."

Several of these were projects that had been

blocked. They are now coming to fruition thanks to the efforts of many of you who persevered to make them come true. Each morning, that perseverance gleams in many ways. It's an extraordinary thing, these 150 full- and part-run sections a week, 2,500 stories a week that you create. More words on an average day than are in the New Testament—occasionally approaching that wisdom—and by a news staff that is increasingly diverse—now 19%—almost double what it was five years ago—though still with a need to diversify to better match our public and to make even better use of the rich mix in our newsroom.

The many publics we serve in Southern California have been through harrowing years too, which is why we gave them "The Next Los Angeles" section as an agenda-setter all its own, because part of our mission is to help guide the region to a better future. But as Lyndon Johnson once said to another set of would-be agenda-setters, "Telling a man to go to hell and getting him to do it are two different things." The same with telling Southern California to go to heaven in the not-too-distant future.

For that matter, some people worry about the future of newspapers. I once was on a "Nightline" panel about newspapers and was smacked across the face....the first question out of the box: "What was it like working for a dinosaur?" It's worth noting that dinosaurs were around for many centuries. And as Jurassic Park made clear, they're still quite popular.

But it's also worth noting that in the past year, new media projects at The Times have also blossomed. The founding editor of World Report has become the founding editor of The Times' new Online news service. Times-Link gets 60,000 calls a week from readers. Times Fax services go out to hundreds of investors. Another Times group is developing CD-ROMs that have impressed people from Apple to book publishers.

All of these are part of the search for the new platforms that news will come on in the future. For all that's been written about the high-powered media mergers going on now—the diamond lane to the Information Superhighway—no one yet has a fix on what those platforms will be. So we have to keep experimenting.

We've all heard visions of new platforms—a flat panel, operated by touch, with a virtually unlimited supply of information, interactive ads and subject matter chosen just for you. And when you finish flipping through the crystal-clear images, another monitor will spit out an audiocassette of all the custom-chosen stories you haven't had time to read so you can listen to them in your car on the way to work.

That vision is a little unsettling to those of us ink-stained wretches who have made our lives and

careers around seeing the morning miracle roll off the presses in blessed profusion.

But it needn't be unsettling if we consider one important point: If newspapers were reduced to their news- and advertising-gathering functions, their expenses would be reduced by 80%. The tremendous current costs of production and circulation could be substantially less in the new electronic world.

Further, as George Gilder, the author of "Microcosm," wrote in a recent issue of *Forbes* ASAP: "The ultimate reason that the newspapers will prevail in the New Information Age is that they are better than anyone else at collecting, editing, filtering and presenting real information, and they are allying with the computer juggernaut to do it. They are targeting adults with real interests and ambitions rather than distracting children from more edifying pursuits."

What this means is that what we do in the heart of editorial will be at the heart of the New Information Age. The future content of news can be guessed at by its past. News is what's on society's mind. Some of that changes; uniquely, much of it fits enduring patterns. That's human psychology.

All the way back to Roman times, tales of disasters, scandal and undeserved good fortune have intrigued mankind; at the Roman Forum, the posted news-type notices concentrated on two subjects: divorce and crime. What's important to keep in mind about content is that information has to be shaped, and we in the news are in a battle for attention.

Whether it's on pages or screens, the analytical imperative of words matters. Words invite comparisons and scrutiny. So, just as in the Gulf War, when television bathed viewers in images 24 hours a day, so during the fires and the earthquakes, Los Angeles Times circulation spiked upward hugely. Our words, our captions, our graphics, our pictures stopped the action; made sense of chaos and spoke to the minds and hearts of our readers; gave them guides of where to go and what to seek for help; became, in short, indispensable.

Try this scenario for the future of newspapers: The page lives long. Radio and TV changed newspapers but didn't kill them. The evolving computer may do the same. The paper itself is handy, divisible, portable, cheap, and accidentally leaving it on the bus won't throw you into a tizzy the way leaving behind your hand-held Newton would.

At this point, quality newspapers are well positioned for a good future on paper and on screens. Where the future of news is concerned, technology is temporary; content is king.

Tonight we honor the kings and queens of content—the agenda-setters who give Southern California readers a window on the world and the world a window on Southern California. You are the

aces, come hell or high water, come fire or flood, come drought or quake. And it's a joy to work with you to make The Next Los Angeles Times.

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drought or quake.

C A T E G O R Y

A

*For the best metropolitan or
statewide article or series of
articles in which the pressure
of edition time is not a factor.*

WINNER

DAVID WILLMAN

Coffey: Tonight our first presenter, for category A, will be Julie Wilson, the editor of the Ventura edition. Category A is for the best metropolitan or statewide article or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor. Julie.

Wilson: A good reporter is sometimes like the solitary gold miner. The miner picks away at rock walls; the reporter works his way through stone walling sources. While one hunts for gold, the other looks for those golden glints of truth that we call news. The winner in this category found gold when he burrowed beneath the streets of Los Angeles and deep into file cabinets for documents that others had failed to mine with the same exacting eye. He found subway tunnels with walls less than half as thick as ordered. And he found a seriously flawed process for letting contracts and inspecting the work. The judges said these stories stand "in the highest tradition of public service journalism." For work on the Metro Rail project, the award goes to Metro reporter David Willman.

Willman: Thank you very much. Truly, it's an honor to be recognized in this way, and it wouldn't have been possible without the great work and help of a number of people. I fear I'm going to overlook a number of them, but I'd like to name some people. First of all, Craig Turner for giving me the chance to do this. Tim Reiterman who, night in and night out, has kept the work up to, I think, the best standard that we've been able to reach. And Shelby Coffey for standing in there and being unequivocally supportive when it would have been, I think, easier to have not been. And a number of other people who have helped: Nora Zamichow, who does such a good job of covering the beat of transportation, Mark Stein, who has left us but who was so generous with his knowledge and time. I consider this work a high privilege and I appreciate this very much. Thank you.

Coffey: Tonight our first presenter, for category A, will be Julie Wilson, the editor of the Ventura edition. Category A is for the best metropolitan or statewide article or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor. Julie

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C A T E G O R Y

A

For the best metropolitan or
statewide article or series of
articles in which the pressure
of edition time is not a factor

WINNER

DAVID WILLMAN

CATEGORY

B

*For the best foreign, national or
financial article or series of
articles in which the pressure of
edition time is not a factor*

WINNER

RICHARD E. MEYER

Coffey: Category B is for the best foreign, national or financial article or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor.

Wilson: The story begins this way. "First, the sisters heard their five fellow nuns were missing. It was not true. Then they heard the nuns were safe. That was not true." What was true, we learned, was that the nuns were dead, murdered in brutal ways and desecrated even in death. In many ways this is a story that is hard to read because of the inhumanities it reports. But it is also a story so filled with the humanity of the nuns that it is a story hard not to read. These women could have been forgotten. Certainly, some say, their government forgot them. But a reporter remembered them and wrote so powerfully about their lives and their deaths that anyone that reads these pieces cannot soon forget them. The reporter, and the winner for his two-part series, is national reporter Richard E. Meyer.

Meyer: My thanks go to Mike Miller and to Roger Smith for standing tall for excellence and for encouraging us to go for it. And for having patience with us when we fall short and then for encouraging us to stand up and go for it again. My thanks also go to a convent full of nuns who gave me the run of the place, which I must say at times was a bit disconcerting. Special thanks go to Tim Rutten, who sat with me and the story at his dining room table for a long time and with thoughtful consideration and careful editing gave it wings. Thanks very much.

Coffey: Category B is for the best foreign, national or financial article or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor.

Whelan: The story begins this way, "That the sisters heard their five fellow nuns were missing. It was not true. Then they heard the nuns were safe. That was not true. What was true, we learned, was that the nuns were dead, murdered in brutal ways and desecrated even in death. In many ways this is a story that is hard to read because of the inhumanity of the reports. But it is a story story so filled with the humanity of the nuns that it is a story hard not to read. These women could have been forgotten. Certainly, some say, their government forgot them. But a reporter remembered them and wrote so powerfully about their lives and their deaths that anyone that reads these pieces cannot soon forget them. The reporter, and the winner for his two-part series, is national reporter Richard E. Meyer.

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CATEGORY

B

For the best foreign, national or

financial article or series of

articles in which the pressure of

edition time is not a factor

WINNER

RICHARD E. MEYER

CATEGORY

C

For the best Orange County,

San Fernando Valley,

Ventura or suburban

sections article or series

of articles in which the

pressure of edition time

is not a factor

WINNERS

JOHN JOHNSON

AND

RICHARD DERK

Coffey: Category C is for the best Orange County, San Fernando Valley, Ventura or suburban sections articles or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor.

Wilson: You know The Times sends its reporters and photographers into all sorts of hellholes throughout the world. They brave bullets. They brave bullies. They brave bad food. They brave bad working conditions. But this award tonight honors two who didn't have to go very far to risk braving all of those things. They spent a year in a Los Angeles Unified School District middle school. And they lived to tell about it in vivid prose and striking images. And for their efforts, we learn what it is really like inside not just a school building but inside the minds of teachers and students who come together each day in that grand exercise known as public education. The award for "Hard Lessons" goes to the Valley Edition's John Johnson and Richard Derk.

Johnson: I know how tiresome it is when an award winner gets up and thanks everyone but the doctor who delivered him or her. Even so, on a project as massive as this one, the length of which was a short novel, it would be a greater sin or a crime to ignore the contributions of those people who help bring it to fruition, so please bear with me a moment while I name a few names.

First of all I'd like recognize Ardith Hilliard and Charles Carter, who conceived of this project and gave me the time and latitude to do it. Ardith patiently soothed my anxieties as the weeks passed and as I feared at first that I didn't have a story to tell, and as time went then soothed my anxieties when I was afraid I couldn't tell it. Bob Rector provided a soft yet sure editing hand discouraging my worst excesses while encouraging the best impulses. Ed Silver wrote the heads, and Pam Wilson did the final copy editing and accepted changes I wanted to make almost until the last moment, when the presses were running. John Arthur skillfully herded the project through many thickets. And more than almost anybody else up here tonight, I owe thanks to Carol Stogsdill and Shelby Coffey for allowing us to spend the money to produce this special section the way it needed to be done in a difficult economic time. I am grateful to work for a paper where this kind of effort can be made on a story that had nothing going for it except that it was important.

Richard Derk, the photographer on the story, is not here, and so I want to say a few things about him and for him. First of all, I will admit a prejudice and a failing: I have a tendency when I have a good story to leave the photographer out at first. I can't defend it, but I fear anyone intruding on what I'm trying to set up. I feel free to admit this flaw because I can now say that working with Richard rooted out this prejudice. He was an irreplaceable asset to this story. He developed contacts on campus that helped us obtain information that I missed. Besides that, his pictures were wonderful. One of the editors had told me he'd never seen a story in which the photographs worked as well with action in the story. This is the finest testimonial to his work and the best compliment I know how to give, even secondhand. If he were here, I'm sure he'd want me to note the contributions of Perry Riddle, who helped select the pictures, and John Markman, who made sure the art and graphics and words all fit

together. Thank you very much.

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CATEGORY

D

For the best View, Calendar,

Sports or weekly section

article or series of articles

in which the pressure

of edition time

is not a factor

WINNER

JOSH GETLIN

Coffey: Category D is for the best View, Calendar, Sports or weekly section article or series of articles in which the pressure of edition time is not a factor.

Wilson: You know no evening of newspapering is quite complete without somebody insisting on quoting H.L. Mencken. So here is my offering: "The basic fact about human existence is not that it is a tragedy but that it is a bore." I use this downer observation to segue into a series of stories that illustrated just the reverse. Stories that told about neither tragedy nor boredom but about people full of life. People who fought back. People who bucked the system in their own individual ways. The judges called the series "an ambitious idea, smartly executed." They said it "showed how care and time, observation and real reporting can make a three-dimensional profile come to life." The winner for "Bucking the System" is View writer Josh Getlin.

Getlin: I'd like to begin by saying that it's a great honor to receive this award, and I too will attempt to be brief in listing the people to whom I owe a great deal of thanks for the ability to do this kind of work in the first place.

First of all, I want to thank Shelby Coffey for his generosity in making it possible for me to work in New York. Secondly, I want to thank Narda Zacchino. She's been a wise counselor, a gifted editor and a very good friend over the years—someone who's had a profound influence on my growth as a journalist at The Times. These days I'm very lucky and fortunate to be working with editors like Alice Short and Charlie Waters in View. They challenge me to do my best work and they do it with intelligence, imagination and good humor. And there is my in-house editor, in the most literal sense of the word—my wife, Heidi Evans, has always given me extremely sound advice on stories, and she's also the best damn reporter I've ever known. Believe me, you don't want this woman coming after you. Ever. She's very creative too, and now she's outdone herself, I must say, with the birth of our first child, a daughter, last week. I can never thank her enough.

When it comes to this particular award, however, there is one person I want to single out in particular, and that's Karen Wada. We reporters are forever daydreaming of that moment when an editor comes up to you, offers sweeping creative freedom and does it with a smile. It almost sounds too good to be true, but I had just such an experience in late 1992. At the time, Karen was the View editor, and she made me an offer I simply couldn't refuse. She asked me to stretch myself creatively, to pick a topic, travel wherever I needed to go and to take my time in finishing the job.

This four-part series was the result of that, and I'll always be grateful because I came to know four fascinating people in the process, each of them a hell-raiser, each of them a maverick who bucks the system and with little to show for it. I wanted to know what makes these kinds of people tick: what they do, why they do it and how they continue to do it in the face of such persistent disappointment. There was Mary Ellen Beaver, a paralegal who fights day in and day out for sugar cane workers in Florida, even though few people seem to care about what she does. I met

judges: Judith Sheindlin, a brilliant, abrasive woman who tries to bring order to the chaos of New York family court with only mixed results. In a Chicago housing project, I met Hazel Johnson, a woman who has been fighting environmental racism for 20 years and in one of the nation's most polluted areas. And finally there was Dr. Don Francis in the Bay Area, one of the first whistle-blowers in the federal government over the AIDS epidemic and an angry man, a man who pounded one too many tables to try and wake up the Reagan Administration and who was fired because of it. Each of these people could have found a more comfortable life doing something else, but they were driven by something stronger: a core of ethics, a sense of values that prevented them from walking away from a crisis. They were unforgettable people. And for all these reasons, I'd like to think that this award honors them as much as me. Thanks again.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

EDITORIAL AWARDS

1991

WINNERS

1. JUDITH SHEINDLIN

2. HAZEL JOHNSON

3. DR. DON FRANCIS

4. JUDITH SHEINDLIN

5. HAZEL JOHNSON

6. DR. DON FRANCIS

7. JUDITH SHEINDLIN

8. HAZEL JOHNSON

9. DR. DON FRANCIS

10. JUDITH SHEINDLIN

11. HAZEL JOHNSON

12. DR. DON FRANCIS

13. JUDITH SHEINDLIN

14. HAZEL JOHNSON

15. DR. DON FRANCIS

CATEGORY

E

For the best article

in The Los Angeles

Times Magazine

WINNER

DAVID FERRELL

Coffey: Category E is for the best article in The Los Angeles Times Magazine.

Wilson: In a magazine full of stylish writing throughout the year, it could be difficult to pick out a single winner. Yet the judges in this category said they were irresistibly drawn to one story because it so beautifully captured the dichotomy of a man who had greatness within his grasp but who lacked the ability to hold onto it. The writer described his subject this way: "A Damon Runyon character. A screw-up, a Mother Teresa figure. A great man. A loser. A Robin Hood. A misguided missile." The award for the best magazine story, a portrait of Al Stankie, a trainer of young boxers, goes to David Ferrell.

Ferrell: This is really a thrill for me. It's the first time that something like this has happened, and I don't want to say a lot, but I do want to especially thank Bret Israel and Nick Williams and David Blume for their guidance and for believing in the story and wanting it very much. I really had a great time doing it, and it's just a thrill to work at a place where you can find such an incredible character and spend time with them and travel with them and try to bring them to life in some way. I'm very honored. Thank you very much.

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E

1980-1981

1981-1982

1982-1983

1983-1984

1984-1985

CATEGORY

F

*For the best column,
commentary or editorial*

WINNER

DANA PARSONS

Coffey: Category F for the best column, commentary or editorial will be presented by Metro Editor Leo Wolinsky.

Wolinsky: Hi. When I was up here a year ago I was talking about preparedness for the riots, you might remember, and we've had a lot of things happen since then. We've had fires and an earthquake and we had mudslides, and I want to tell you that a basic truth remains. It's better to wear a combination of polyester and cotton—rather than 100% cotton shirt. That still is true today, and I just want you to remember that. And that is my plan for the next disaster. Now on to something totally different.

Being a columnist is like walking a tightrope. You have to entertain, and you have to make a point. And you have to make your point without lecturing, talking down or flogging your subject into submission. When a column works, it's like opera. When it fails, it's like indigestion. And when this tightrope act has to be repeated three times every week ... well, you get the picture.

Our winner seems to have figured out the secret. His columns are a joy to read. Free of preaching, prattling or silly posturing. Said the judges: "He's often funny and always timely, whether catching the sadness of Laguna burning or wondering about Beavis, Butt-head and Bob Dornan." Among his most compelling, though, was his open letter following the death of his father. "Dammit, Dad," he wrote, "I knew I'd start missing you most in the spring, right around the start of the season when the weather warms up and the teams break camp and start playing under lights for real. Man, how many years did we sit and compare notes on who was going to win the pennant and who was going to have a big year, and who was going to go belly up." The winner in Category F is Orange County columnist Dana Parsons.

Parsons: Thank you, Leo, and thank you, judges. I was in a good mood until hearing that read back. There is a star in the Orange County newsroom, but believe me it is not the local columnist, it's the reporting staff as a collective body. This is a staff that is outnumbered two to one by the Register and every day is out there busting it, breaking news, doing investigative stories and covering the beats. As it relates to me, they have been unfailingly generous in sharing sources, which is something reporters are not known for. Giving background information, helping with ideas and, of course, I rely on their clips—so I don't think they realize how important it is to me getting this column out three times a week. All of that would go for naught if the editors decided to get in the way, as we know they can.

Three years ago when I was thinking of taking the job, Pat McMahon said, "I promise you we will not Monday morning quarterback you." Three and a half years later, through a chain of editors that included Richard Bean at first, and Ardie Hilliard, they continue to abide by that promise every week. Marty Baron is the cool contrarian who runs the show these days. He's made it clear to the staff that he puts a premium on good writing and good ideas and a willingness to step outside of convention. That's music to any columnist's ears.

There are a couple of people I need to single out for what I wish could be embarrassingly effusive praise, but I will try to condense it. Bill Nottingham is the day-to-day column editor—he's

the guy who listens to the neurotic ramblings, pats me on the head when I have another anxiety attack and then just says, "Go out there and do what you're supposed to." He's a paradox to me; he's a guy who takes great pride in his profession and in what he does every day, and yet he brings less ego to it than anybody I've ever worked with. The only thing he has not grasped is how vital he is to getting this column put together every week.

And the last person is the one who proves the old adage that behind every semi-successful Orange County columnist is a blond-haired senior editor downtown. I was quite literally leaning against the lamppost, journalistically, a few years ago when Carol said "Guess what, you're going to start writing a column." And then she did what I think all great editors do, she gave me the confidence that I could do it and then she got out of the way and allowed me to do it. And it's hard not to think I owe her big-time when I realize this put me on the most rewarding path of my professional life. I'm thrilled to be here, and I'm thrilled to share it with the Orange County people who've got their fingerprints all over this. Thanks very much.

CATEGORY

G

*For the best news story
in any department written
under the pressure
of edition time*

WINNER

JIM NEWTON

Coffey: Category G is for the best news story in any department written under the pressure of edition time.

Wolinsky: More often than not, the deadline category is captured by one of those major disasters when the event's so big and powerful that the writer can simply hope to hold on for dear life and pray that he or she misses nothing important. But as we all know, the news has a way of surprising even the most experienced journalists.

Nearly a year after the day that the acquittal of four police officers brought unprecedented rioting to Los Angeles, another jury convened to announce its judgment in the case, and the city held its breath. This time, though, the outcome was different. The result was a sweeping story built on reports from dozens of reporters in the streets and in the halls of justice that chronicled a momentous day of peace. The story was the culmination of four months of grueling court reporting that explained the legal subtleties of the case, laid out what was at stake and captured the surreal atmosphere that often surrounded the trial.

The judges said the verdict day story reflected the kind of daily coverage the author provided over the entire course of the trial. It was coverage marked by extraordinary energy, reach and thoughtfulness. That author is Metro's heat-seeking missile, known around Times Mirror Square as the Newtonian Bomb, Jim Newton. Jim is out today, and City Editor Joel Sappell will accept the award on his behalf.

Sappell: Yeah, fat chance; what's the closing price tonight? Well, Jim is skiing up in Canada so from the mountaintop he has dictated to me a little speech and it begins: "Thank you all so much. I'm very sorry to miss the event but when Joel said he'd read this without making any changes, I figured it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

I'm especially grateful to receive this award tonight because I take it as recognition for the tremendous work that so many people did in covering the King civil rights trial. Literally dozens of reporters, editors and photographers did wonderful jobs during that time, all of which came together in the final day's coverage. I wanted to particularly thank Rick Serrano, who broke so much ground on this story that everything I wrote about it owes a nod to him; Paul Lieberman, who wrote so many great pieces about the case that you'd never know he spent every day lecturing me about how there could never be any convictions; and Henry Weinstein, our in-house legal counsel, who produced many fine analyses as well as saving me from looking foolish as we tried to unravel the legal angles of a complicated prosecution.

Most of all, though, I'd like to thank two editors who worked together, who together improved every word of our coverage. Lennie La Guire, who edited the verdict story and who wrote all the eloquent sections while I sat next to her and nodded in agreement, and Joel, whose patience, good humor and intelligence shaped every single story about this case and to whom I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. Thank you all again, I am honored and flattered to count you as colleagues and friends." And he thought that. Why would I edit that? Sounds perfect.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES
THE WASHINGTON POST
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES
THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE
THE PHOENIX

RENEWAL
RENEWAL

C A T E G O R Y

H

For the best news

or feature story

under 1,200 words.

WINNER

BILL PLASCHKE

Coffey: Actually I saw Jim's note—he didn't say anything about Joel in the original. But it was very touching the way you read it. The ever-popular Category H is for the best news or feature story under 1,200 words.

Wolinsky: Ahhh, the short subject, my favorite category. But Shelby, can we change this to length-impaired maybe? I would feel a lot better about this, thank you. Just a suggestion, you know.

For an editor confronted with a whole lot of different kinds of stories, mainly the long ones, the longer ones and of course the long and multiple long parts—those are my favorites—there is nothing like the occasional piece that simply gets to the point and allows us to move along with our lives. Wouldn't that be nice? It'll never happen, I'll tell you. Of those, only a very few have the power to make us pause and consider how noble life can be. One of those was the story of Tim Burk's decision to leave a promising and highly lucrative career in baseball to devote more time to his wife and his four adopted and physically handicapped children. The power of the piece is in the simplicity of the telling, the images of the Cincinnati Reds player quietly cleaning out his locker while his teammates silently looked on, his final drive from the Reds' Florida complex on a Saturday morning. "He began to cry," the story says. "And he cried for the next 25 miles."

The judges praised this "touching story that propels the reader along an arc from 'how can Burk leave all that money?' to 'how could he not?'" The winner of Category H did it all in 1,157 words, right under the deadline. He is Bill Plaschke of Sports.

Plaschke: I'm amazed to be here, not just because I'm from Sports but because I've got to be honest with you: I've never written a story under 1,200 words in my life. My thanks go to the three editors downstairs who said the immortal words last April, "Bill, we gotta whack this thing." So to them, I gotta be honest to them, this award should be shared.

But actually this award, I feel like this is an honor for all the Sports department. I'm very proud of the things we do, and I know when it comes time for the riots and the earthquakes and the mudslides, they pretty much tell us to stay out of the way. Even though we all want to get involved, I don't blame them, but they want us to stay out of the way. But we're kind of there every day, and I'm really proud of that fact. If anybody who reads Randy Harvey's coverage from the Olympics, anybody who reads our headlines—a lot of the times the guys put better lines in the heads than are in my stories; it makes me mad.

So we really do, I think, an amazing job every day. At the L.A. marathon, I was really struck by it. I was covering the marathon. I was down at the start and 19,000 people—a lot of them had their lives messed up by the earthquakes—and they all start and they're all running past and they're cheering and clapping and screaming. And I thought, this is what sports is, really; what it's about is about human resiliency. And I feel that our Sports department covers that, and I think that can be kind of important too. Thanks.

CATEGORY

I

*For the best project
by a team of reporters from
any department*

WINNER

FRANK SOTOMAYOR

Coffey: Category I is for the best project by a team of reporters from any department.

Wolinsky: Well, so much for an editor's fancy. It's the end of those short stories now. Now we're on to one of those categories that screams long and multiple long: best project by a team of reporters from any department. This is a category for which the Los Angeles Times has perhaps become best known. By marshaling its resources, The Times has been able to do the kinds of stories with the depth and impact ... others can only dream.

This year the judges made special mention of the Moscow Bureau's three-part series, "Legions of Gloom," which explored the power and the plight of the armed forces of the former Soviet Union. The judges lauded it for its impressive and comprehensive reporting. But the top honor is reserved for an unusual effort. It was undertaken by 13 reporters from 10 departments and sections of the paper. They collaborated on a 16-story project that was as noteworthy for its success in tearing down the walls that separate us here at The Times as it was for casting new light on a subject that divides the nation.

"The Great Divide: Immigration in the 1990s" was one of several projects begun after Shelby Coffey recognized that resources were going unused because departments sometimes have difficulty coordinating their talented staffs. Ultimately, reporters from Metro, Valley, Ventura, Orange County, San Diego, Sacramento, National, Business, Foreign and View created a package of stories that the judges praised for its "freshness of approach and the sweep of its achievement." The daunting task of shaping the concept into a high-impact package and keeping the speeding locomotive from flying off the tracks fell to a long-time editor here whose background helped give him the kind of keen insight needed to separate fact from emotion-laden fiction.

He's a former editor of *Nuestro Tiempo* whose assignments over the years have ranged from editing Olympics coverage to heading the City Desk's coverage of Los Angeles' changing communities. The prize goes to Assistant City Editor Frank Sotomayor.

Sotomayor: Thank you very much. As Leo noted, it really was a newspaper-wide project, and I feel very humble to accept this award. And I really do accept it on behalf of those of you from all departments who worked on this series. And I would like to acknowledge you at this time and hope that I don't leave people out because there are so many of you who did take part.

When Shelby appointed a committee to marshal the resources of the newspaper on this very important subject, he gave us the task of putting together high-impact stories in a very short time, and it is to the credit of, first of all, a committee of people that I'd like to name who took the task and helped us bring it to fruition. The members of that committee were Jane Bornemeier, Dick Cooper, Jim Schachter, Mark Saylor, Bill Overend, Vicky McCargar, Michelle Williams, Craig Matsuda, Alice Short, Steve Padilla and Armando Durazo. In particular, I would like to recognize Jim Schachter, who even before the committee was named had been urging us to do a series on immigration.

Next I want to recognize the work of the reporters whose talents we really need to recognize in a big way. They are the ones who put the stories together—I counted 18, Leo, so, 16 or 18, we had three weeks' worth of stories and sidebars. And the reporters were Fred Alvarez, Ronald Brownstein, Juanita Darling, Leslie Helm, Jesse Katz, Patrick McDonnell, Paul Jacobs, Diane Klein, Alan Miller, Michael Quintanilla, Sebastian Rotella, Stuart Silverstein and Rich Simon. I want to note especially the work of Mark Saylor and Jesse Katz on the story "One Day in the Life of Illegal Immigration in Southern California." Mark was the director, producer and editor of that big project involving people from San Diego to Ventura, and Jesse did a wonderful job of putting that all together in a wonderful story. There were at least 18 reporters involved in that, and time does not allow us to name everybody.

Sharing the job of primary editing with me were five outstanding people, outstanding editors, and I want to thank them now. They are Jim Schachter, Tim Reiterman, Jane Bornemeier, Joel Havemann and Mark Saylor. Thanks also to the photography and graphic staff, to the Metro copy desk, the news editors, and Leo, Joel and my colleagues on the City Desk for giving me time to do this project and for our often unsung heroes, the researchers, especially Nona Yates, Julia Franco and Cary Schneider. And as you can see with 30-odd names, it was a very big show, and I thank you all.

CATEGORY

J

*For consistent excellence by an
assignment editor.*

WINNER
JIM SCHACHTER

Coffey: Category J is for consistent excellence by an assignment editor.

Wolinsky: Being the best at anything has its pitfalls. You might get famous. Autograph seekers are going to interrupt your romantic cappuccino breaks. The curious are going to rifle through your trash. Your barber's going to sell a lock of your hair at an Elvis convention. This happens. I know this. This does happen. But you assignment editors need not worry. This fate's not going to befall you. No chance. And now hear this lament of the assignment editor. You labor in anonymity. You turn pale. You never see the sun. What you do see of the world is through those black Venetian blinds. Who chose those anyway? I don't get that. You reporters have clips with big bylines to prove their value. You have hemorrhoids to prove you've been sitting around too long. That was George's favorite line, right? Still, there are a few who overcome these obstacles to lead decent lives and even more. They distinguish themselves and quietly elevate that which we do to an art form.

The winner this year is such a talent. In the past year alone he supervised several high-impact investigative projects—Scot Paltrow's hard look into the fraudulent marketing schemes of Prudential Bache Securities and the probe of Deputy Mayor Al Villalobos that drove Villalobos from office. He also helped oversee a major look at California taxes. All the while he won high praise for the innovations he brought to the Sunday Business section, where he's been consistently responsible for bright, stylish and in-depth pieces even while playing a significant role in the section's day-to-day coverage. The judges called him a "versatile enough editor to step back from daily breaking stories and investigative reports to also help produce those 'big picture' reports that readers expect from The Times." Those who work with him know him as incredibly creative, full of ideas and among the best in helping reporters achieve their goals. The winner of Category J is Assistant Business Editor Jim Schachter.

Schachter: Thank you, Leo and Shelby. I was worried there when we started talking about having locks of hair taken away. I'm glad I'm following Frank, because I have a lot of people I want to thank as well. And thank you too, Frank, for saying the nice things about me.

Let me mention somebody who isn't here, Dale Featherling, who gave me a chance to work at The Times; Marty Baron and Dennis Britton, who gave me a chance to come to Los Angeles; and Bob Magnuson, who gave me a chance to become an editor. I was walking out to the parking lot with Ken Reich last night, and it reminded me that I think the first story I edited at The Times was one of Ken's and I, nonetheless, persisted in my ambition. And I think we're now pals.

Let me thank also my colleagues on the Business desk: Bill Sing, Linda Williams, Melanie Clarkson, Tom Furlong, Dan Akst and Steve Seiler. The people who put out the Sunday section really are the people who don't get any recognition, but Paul Zieke, week in and week out, makes it come together in whatever difficult circumstances—the dummies presented late Friday afternoon. Mark Yemma and Robert Burns bring flair to that job

as well. I want to thank Jim Flanigan and Tom Petrino for—on just as steady a basis as I think they do for the readers of the paper—helping me understand how business really works and teaching me a lot about that. I should thank Al Villalobos who, in the great tradition of Peter Ueberroth, gave us a big fat target to aim at, and to point out the good work of Ted Rohrlich and Nancy Rivera Brooks that helped bring attention to the problems in his background.

I think assignment editors may not get a lot of fame and glory, but that's fine. What we can do is to get squarely in the way of everybody at the paper and outside the paper who will do anything to make life difficult for reporters in doing the job of bringing this institution's power and credibility to bear on the important subjects that they write about. And if we can just do that every day, that's really honor enough. Thank you.

C A T E G O R Y

K

*For consistent excellence
evaluating the use of news
and graphic elements by a
news editor or for excellence in
copy editing skills*

WINNER

BARBARA THOMAS

Coffey: Category K for consistent excellence evaluating the use of news and graphic elements by a news editor or for excellence in copy editing skills will be presented by Frank del Olmo, deputy editor of the Editorial Pages.

Del Olmo: This award could be called The Times' memorial to the unknown soldier. In a business where bylines are almost as important as the pay, it's easy for those of us who do write for a living to overlook the very valuable support we get from copy editors. A careful editor backs us up on spelling, on grammar, on second references, on the context of our writing and even our logic.

The person who will receive the award this year is one of those careful copy editors, but she is much more than that. This person played a pivotal role in the expansion of the Valley and Ventura operations last year, an expansion that put a huge strain on all of those people striving to put out a clean and error-free newspaper every day. One person was put in a key position to coordinate all the copy flowing out of the Valley and Ventura each day to see that it went smoothly into the composing room. She had to envision pages laid out by editors 30 miles away, understand Times technology well enough to solve any problems that came up on deadline and, yes, had to spot the occasional misspelling that got through. Luckily, as deputy managing editor Terry Schwadron puts it, "we had someone in place whose cool leadership and quick thinking turned that difficult job into a one-stop problem-solving place that everyone could turn to." For her excellent work as copy editor/liaison for the Valley edition, the award will go to Barbara Thomas.

Thomas: Well, I don't feel like an unknown soldier. In fact, I feel like too much praise has been put on me and not enough on the composing room and everybody else in the department who's done such a good job. I want to thank Terry Schwadron and Carol Stogsdill because, if it had been up to me, I would have turned to Shelby and said, "We can't do this. This is too much, and we can't do it." And to thank Jon Markman and John Arthur for their generous praise and much, much support. And also Steve Hensch, who's the slot out on the copy desk who's sort of the invisible leader for me. He and the copy desk put out an enormous amount of copy, and we're just down there pasting it up. Thank you very much.

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Los Angeles Times



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CATEGORY

L

*For consistently excellent
graphic design or information
graphics*

WINNER

CHRIS ERSKINE

Coffey: Category L is for consistently excellent graphic design or information graphics

Del Olmo: Those of you with institutional memories will know that this is a new category, and it's created out of the high quality of graphics in The Times. They've become critical in helping this and other newspapers explain complex procedures and processes to our readers, as well as giving them useful background information. Certainly the winner tonight played a pivotal role in doing just that. The federal budget, health care reform, NAFTA, elections, trade with Japan, even the inside layout of the White House, all became a little bit more comprehensible to Times readers because of the understanding this staffer brought to those topics and his ability to refine the information so that it could be graphically presented. This person is not himself an artist, but no series or project produced by the National or Foreign staff is considered complete without his review to determine if there is a way to make the information more accessible and readable. The award goes to the coordinator of graphics for the Foreign and National desks, Chris Erskine.

Erskine: Shelby asked me to announce that he just received the bar tab from tonight's cocktail party and, as a result, the C.R.I. has been downgraded to 1.3%. I'll keep this short. I'd like to thank Vicky McCargar and Terry Schwadron for making my job one of the best at the newspaper, at any newspaper; thanks to the reporters, line editors, news editors, graphics coordinators for all their help in getting graphics into the paper; thanks to the talented artists, especially to the talented artists here and in O.C. and Valley for their incredible work; thanks to the desks which spot so many little problems before they become big problems; thanks to Dave Rickley and Wayne Parrack and the people in systems and production for going the extra mile for us; thank you to George Cotliar who, as far as I'm concerned, is the gold standard as far as managing editors go. And thank you to my wife, Cathy, who is the gold standard as far as wives go. Thank you very much.

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES EDITORIAL AWARDS

The Los Angeles Times Editorial Awards are presented annually to the best editorial in the Los Angeles Times for the year. The award is presented to the author of the editorial, who is selected by a panel of judges. The award is presented to the author of the editorial, who is selected by a panel of judges. The award is presented to the author of the editorial, who is selected by a panel of judges.

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C A T E G O R Y

M

*For the best feature
photograph or photographic
series in any area*

WINNERS

GAIL FISHER

PATRICK DOWNS

Coffey: We're within about three categories of getting to the Publisher's Prizes, and everybody's been sitting for a little over an hour. If you want to stand up, maybe take a seventh-inning stretch just for a minute, you're very welcome to. Stay in place, don't move, don't go back to the bar. That's very important; that bill is most alarming. OK. Now we'll go back down for Category M, for the best feature photograph or photographic series in any area.

Del Olmo: We have a tie in Category M, so I'm going to ask you if you'll please hold your applause until I've had a chance to announce them both and ask them both to join us.

The first series were photos that illustrated the life of poor denizens of a fleabag hotel in the Bronx. Because most of its residents are drug addicts waiting to die of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, Times correspondent Barry Bearak dubbed it "The AIDS Hotel." And while it is a real challenge to match the power of Barry's writing, photos like that of an AIDS-infected man showing people his scars on a New York subway train while he was begging for money carried an impact all-around. That is why part of this award goes to the photographer who illustrated the AIDS Hotel series, Patrick Downs.

The second series to share this prize took a major international story and helped bring it home to readers of one of The Times' local editions. The ethnic bloodletting in the former Yugoslavia has been going on for more than two years now, and we probably think we've seen all there is to see about it. Not just the awful destruction and human suffering, but the grandeur when human beings rise above the awful circumstances of a war with acts of courage and selflessness. These photos showed both, but with a unique perspective. They illustrated an article about doctors and hospital workers who travel from Orange County to Bosnia in order to administer to the wounded. They were the work of Orange County photographer Gail Fisher.

Fisher: I'm honored to be up here tonight, and a number of people have made that possible. It all started about 10 years ago when Narda Zacchino hired me. Editors Carol Stogsdill and Marty Baron have been strong advocates of the solid photo display. Without their support and encouragement, these kinds of projects would not be possible. In this fast-paced society where time is such a precious commodity, we need to grab the attention of the readers quickly. With the marriage of words and pictures, we can make this possible.

I had the opportunity to travel to the Balkans, where I worked with foreign correspondent John-Thor Dahlburg and special correspondent Danica Kirka, witnessing the horrors of war. We've seen images like this before, detailing the tragedies of people in conflict, but we shouldn't stop looking at them either. And people like Sonja Hagel of Orange County reacting to the agonies of war as if they're in her own back yard. Thanks to her efforts, teams of surgeons brought their much-needed services and supplies to people in need. And by following the story of a local person making a difference halfway around the world, maybe we can bring to our readers a sense that these sad events aren't just happening to some distant ethnic groups but to

humanity as a whole.

This project, like all the others we do in Orange County, was a team effort, and a number of people deserve recognition. Thank you, Colin Crawford, for your fine editing skills, and Chuck Nigash for your creativity and talent in design; Don Tormey, Mike Young and George Foulsham, Pat McMahon, Topy Fiske and Marty Baron for making this story possible. And a special thanks to my husband, Gregg Patton, for his continued support and always being there for our two small children when I'm away. Thank you.

Downs: I got to go to 183rd and Grand Concourse in the Bronx, and there are people in Manhattan who think you have to have a passport to go there. On my second night there, I chickened out and didn't take the subway back late at night, so I got into this bejeweled long black Gypsy cab which, if you've ever ridden in one, is a treat. I drove all the way, the 500 miles back down to Manhattan, and stopped in front of my luxury hotel on Park Avenue, where we have a trade-out agreement. The doorman opened the door to the cab and he just looked at me from head to toe and he said, "Where have you been?" And where I'd been was really an amazing place, and it's apparently a place where, like many other places some people won't or don't go, afforded an opportunity to step, at least one foot, for a brief time, into another person's world and see the challenges they face.

The people that we encountered at the AIDS Hotel were amazing people, amazingly resilient in spite of the fact that they were dying. And, until they were housed in the hotel, they were homeless. Some of them still hadn't given up their dreams of music careers and were, from day to day, fighting and living as best as they know how.

I really have to thank Barry Bearak; I'm sorry he's not here. We communicate by Coyote sometimes. He's an amazing reporter to work with, and without all the groundwork that he laid by developing the trust of the people at the AIDS Hotel, I wouldn't have been able to make some modest pictures to go with it, parachute in for a few days. It's working with a reporter like Barry—and we have many reporters like that—who is indispensable for the way they can pave the way for me. And hopefully I can be their eyes, and they can be my ears, and we can work together. I'd like to thank two people in particular—Larry Armstrong and Terry Schwadron—for the opportunity to do this story and stories like this. And, lastly, I'd like to say two things: I love newspapers and I love reading newspapers, and I'm particularly thrilled to see my pictures in the L.A. Times. And also that I think we have a tremendous photo staff here, and I'm really proud to be a part of it, so I'd just like to thank my colleagues.

C A T E G O R Y

N

For the best spot news

photograph or

photographic series

in any area

WINNER

GEORGE WILHELM

Coffey: Category N is for the best spot news photograph or photographic series in any area.

Del Olmo: Let's face it; all of us who got into the news business did so at least partly because we like the excitement of covering breaking news, and nothing illustrates the sheer visceral charge of covering a big story like a great news photo. Of course those of you who are covering news these days for this newspaper have had more than your share of big stories this last year, I know. And not surprisingly, this year's spot news photography winner was covering one of those big stories—the fast-moving firestorm that came roaring out of the canyons above Malibu on a windy afternoon last November. As the flames neared the Hughes Research Laboratory, they set a series of tall palm trees afire. The Times photographer captured the dramatic moment. His shot illustrates the fury and unpredictability of a firestorm as only a great photo can. For the photograph he calls "Riding the Wind," the award goes to Valley photographer George Wilhelm.

Wilhelm: Here's how naive I am. I was told I was a finalist and come on down and have a good time. I don't have anything prepared. It's a great honor to work with, I think, the cream of the crop here. We all belong to that fraternity. And I'd like to thank Vanessa Hillian. And my wife, Toby, who, when I get up at 11 in the evening and say, "I'll see you tomorrow sometime; don't worry about me," she supports me, stands behind me. And Bob Pool, actually a writer, who—wherever you are, back in 1976, '78, sometime—came to a junior college I was attending at the time and taking a beginning photojournalism class. Bob came in and spoke with us, showed us some—at that time he was still taking pictures and writing—showed us a picture of a CHP officer who had taken a spill on the highway, and part of his pants were ripped off—just the most wonderful picture I'd ever seen—and I said I want to do that, too. Thank you very much.



Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

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Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

CATEGORY



*For the best example of
good writing in any
department,
regardless of subject,
timeliness or deadline*

WINNER

BARRY SIEGEL

Coffey: Category O is for the best example of good writing in any department, regardless of subject, timeliness or deadline.

Del Olmo: George, I wish I'd known you didn't have any remarks prepared; I could have given you some of those bad jokes Wolinsky tried to fob off on me. It's a great pleasure to give out this award because those of you who have been at The Times as long as I have will remember a time when this newspaper was considered above all else THE writer's paper. A newspaper that day in and day out published the best newspaper prose in the country. Prose so good it sometimes aspired to poetry. Some might argue that this is no longer the case, that newly imposed limits of space and staffing and budgets have changed all that, but I would argue that the writing here is still as good as ever, maybe even better because it is writing with more discipline and sharper focus.

The consistently fine writing of this year's winner stands as testimony to this. The judges felt that it was epitomized by his two Column One reports on the Lakeberg Twins, the Indiana babies who were born joined at the heart and separated by doctors in a precedent-setting but controversial operation. The judges in this category praise the articles for using "a dramatic human tale to illuminate a major public policy issue."

"The individual characters emerged with a vividness of a novel," they wrote. "The quiet and not fully comprehending mother who consigns her babies to a cruel ordeal out of an innocent desire to give them a chance. The father, who only gradually reveals himself as a twisted exploiter. The doctors, whose good intentions carry them deeper and deeper into a trap and eventually into conflict with one another."

"Yet without ever stepping out of the story, which he advances on many complex fronts with great narrative skill," the writer "explores the policy implications of the case with clarity and insight: the astronomical costs, the way these costs are shifted onto others, the paradox of a society that pays for some kinds of health care and refuses to provide other kinds of care that would help more people and save money besides." For his fine writing on the story of the Lakeberg Twins, the award goes to Barry Siegel.

Siegel: I'll be brief. There are just a couple of people I really want to thank: Mike Miller and Roger Smith for putting up with me, supporting me always, keeping me from making a fool out of myself. These are very hard things. They do it very well. The only other person I want to mention is sort of the protagonist of my story, Dr. Jonathon Muraskas. Amazing guy. I resisted him. He kept on trying to send me around to talk to other people. I wanted to interview him and hang out with him for a week. He just kept on lining up appointments for me. I was getting irritated. Until I finally realized he was sending me to his critics—10, 15 of them all around the hospital. He was insisting that I not see him as a perfect person or his story as a simple one. And without that, there would have not been a story at all. Thanks.

PUBLISHER'S PRIZES

WINNERS

SHERYL STOLBERG

TOM PETRUNO

SERGIO MUÑOZ

LESLIE WARD

Coffey: Now we come to the Publisher's Prizes. When the history of the Los Angeles Times in the '90s is written, David Laventhol's pivotal role as publisher will shine as a beacon of strength in difficulty. As publisher, he knew editorial and protected it. As publisher, he saw troubles and dealt with them. As publisher, he cared about the whole paper. So that when he thought that it was the right thing to do for all concerned, he shifted his role from publisher to Times Mirror editor-at-large. He was there when he was needed and will continue to be, and we're forever grateful to him. His successor, Dick Schlosberg, is also a person who cares deeply about editorial quality and has an excellent record here and in Denver and with the Eastern papers of encouraging and nurturing first-rate journalism. Together they will give out the Publisher's Prizes tonight.

Laventhol: Thank you, Shelby. As you said, Dick and I debated how to do this, and we decided we'd share it; I'm going to announce two of the winners, and Dick's going to announce two of the winners.

First, I would like to say that being associated with The Times editorial staff has been a wonderful experience for me. Day after day, month after month, year after year, you practice journalism at its best: around the world and here at home. Nowhere has this been more evident than in our stunning response to the catastrophes that have plagued Los Angeles in the past few years: riots, earthquakes, fires. We know the litany, and it was getting a little too close for comfort there during the slide show, at least for me. What we've done has meant a lot to the people who live here and read us every day and will be remembered for a long time. That gives us all a lot of confidence, as Shelby said, that there will be a future for Los Angeles and there will be a future for newspapers: both reinvented, as our recent special section talked about, within the framework of a changing society and a changing technology that builds on our strengths while charting new paths.

I was about to say something nice about Shelby; he said something nice about me, but I'll say it anyway: No journalist is more qualified to lead the charge to the future than your editor. Shelby has a sense of history and tradition, as well as a sense of innovation and change. In the past five years he's built on the traditions of this great paper to make it even better, more timely and more valuable, and there's more to come.

In the new publisher, you have a strong leader and committed supporter of editorial excellence. Dick Schlosberg understands and appreciates The Times' unique global and local franchises. He also recognizes the importance of editorial independence and the crucial role of the publisher in ensuring that independence is preserved in the face of all sorts of other interests. So you're in good hands. And now on to the awards.

The Publisher's Awards were set up three years ago to recognize outstanding accomplishments, outside of any category, that reflect the strengths, scope, innovation and creativity of The Times as well as its commitment to journalistic excellence, meeting community needs and social responsibility. The award doesn't fall in any particular category. Each of the winners receives \$5,000.

The first Publisher's Award recipient this year is a reporter

with a unique ability to translate complex stories on technical issues in human terms. To most of us, hers is an intimidating specialty—a field that affects all our lives—but in ways most of us don't understand very well. This writer makes the most complicated, difficult issues, ideas and discoveries leap to life. In 1993 she covered all the bases—from breaking news to compelling features and insightful analysis—and covered them all well.

Throughout the year she produced truly top quality work—covering her medical beat in a way that challenged conventional wisdom. For consistently fine writing about the field of medicine, our first Publisher's Award is to Cheryl Stolberg. Congratulations.

Stolberg: Thank you. I didn't expect this. I don't feel very deserving. I'd like to thank a number of people who've given me a chance along the way in my six years here. I'm sure I'll leave a few people out, but names like Leo Wolinsky and Pete King; Noel Greenwood, wherever he is; Craig Turner, who twisted my arm to take the medical beat in the first place when I didn't want to; and people like George Cotliar leap to mind. I'd also like to just thank everyone who works at the L.A. Times, because I feel that it's only by being immersed in a place with so much talent and sophistication that I've been able to grow and mature as a journalist, and I couldn't have done it without all the people here. And finally, I'd like to acknowledge all the people who, during the course of the medical beat, have let me into their lives, often sharing very intimate and painful details. Some of them were doctors who didn't want to talk to me, some of them were patients who were dying, and all of them trusted me to not make them look like fools in the newspaper. Really, they had no reason to put their faith in me, but they did, and without them I wouldn't be here. So, thank you.

Schlosberg: Now it's my turn. I want to say how pleased I am to be here. I haven't been to this ceremony in many years but, Shelby, I thought this was supposed to be at the Century Plaza. I guess I shouldn't have said that. I'm sorry.

Tonight we're here to honor those of you who've had the good fortune to shine the brightest over the past year, and I'm delighted to be part of that. I'm especially pleased that we do this in a way that recognizes extraordinary efforts of the entire staff, day in and day out, efforts that produce one of the truly great newspapers in the world today. As Dave said, day after day, month after month, you turn out the best-written, best-edited stories in the business. The best photos, the best commentary. The breadth and depth of the coverage you provide our readers is head

and shoulders above the competition. And a lot of you have come up here tonight to thank people, so, instead of just thanking Shelby and George and Terry and Narda and Carol and Alvin and Mike and many of you, I want to thank all of you for the job you do every day. And all of your associates that aren't with us tonight. I must tell you that opening up The Times every morning of the week makes me proud to be your publisher. I mean that.

And the work of the next Publisher's Award recipient is one of the special reasons I feel that way. If medicine is a series of complicated mysteries to most of us—as it certainly is to me—the daily twists and turns of the stock market are questions waiting to be asked. This writer knows what questions to ask and what the answers mean. As his editor is quick to point out, his column is the envy of other major newspapers, but fortunately he's ours. His work is sharp and illuminating, offering long-term perspective in plain-spoken terms. What does the Dow Industrial average really tell us, and how are its bellwether stocks chosen? How do you know if your short-term bond fund is taking above-average risk? And should you care? And what does General Motors' resurgence in the stock market really mean? These are the questions Tom Petruno eats for lunch. And his readers devour the answers. Logic and common sense are Tom Petruno's guiding stars, and we're all better for it. Where are you, Tom?

Petruno: It's getting late, and I thought I could just pull a Sinatra up here: We break for a commercial and the lights go down and I just keep repeating "I really don't know what to say." But those of you who know me know that would be highly unlikely.

I just want to say that I work with a terrific group of people in Business, most of them unsung—Parrish, Citron, Schachter usually unsung, Harmon, Williams—just a terrific group of people. So terrific, in fact, that I keep telling Magnuson that we ought to just take the thing private in a leverage buyout and sell our services back to Times Mirror for an extremely high fee. I broached this with Magnuson this morning, and he's still resisting, but I think I'm getting closer. But I do want to thank Bob and Bill Sing, in particular, for believing in me and letting me do whatever it is I do on a daily basis. With the market, one often doesn't know. I mean, you sort of go there and try to explain what's going on and hope that you're right more often than not. I also want to thank Jim Flanigan, frankly because I'm new to this columnist business—I only came here four years ago—and he is absolutely a source of continuing enlightenment and inspiration to me. I just can't say enough about the guy and what he means to me personally. And, as I said, I only got here four years ago, thanks to the

faith of Shelby and Marty Baron, and it just so happened that I arrived in Los Angeles probably at what was the peak for Los Angeles in this cycle. Ever since, we've been through awful things, but I'd like to say, maybe perhaps sounding a little Flaniganesque, but, you know, that which does not kill you makes you stronger. I frankly believe, because I believe so much in cycles, as you have to in the market, that the next cycle for L.A. is up. I would go long on Los Angeles and short on Seattle, Las Vegas and Denver.

Laventhol: Our next recipient of the Publisher's Award is a writer and editor whose work is reaching a huge new audience for us. He's a veteran journalist but a relative newcomer to The Times. He had been a member of our editorial page staff for a short time when we began looking at how we might better serve the Latino community. We decided the new weekly *Nuestro Tiempo* was the way to go. He was a logical choice to lead the editorial effort. His career includes extensive experience in broadcast with Univision and print journalism at La Opinion.

His journalistic skills and his knowledge of the Latino community in Southern California have been valuable in shaping the content and look of the new *Nuestro Tiempo*. The first weekly issue of *Nuestro Tiempo* came off the presses last October, and he has done an excellent job of staying close to the writers and making sure that each week *Nuestro Tiempo* is relevant to the community it's intended to reach. Many reporters, photographers, artists and editors have contributed their talents to the start-up and continued success of *Nuestro Tiempo*, and before that, the old *Nuestro Tiempo*, Frank Sotomayor and others made crucial efforts. But the man who's now making it all happen week after week and winner of our Publisher's Award is Sergio Muñoz.

Muñoz: This is a bad sign in my country. But thank you anyway. I'm deeply honored to receive this prize and, of course, it doesn't belong to me. It belongs to that incredible team that we have in *Nuestro Tiempo* with whom it's a pleasure to work, and also with everyone else in this paper. To give some change I would like to say a few words in Spanish. Gracias. Shelby Coffey, Carol Stogsdill and David Laventhol, who made it possible; to Terry Schwadron, to Frank del Olmo and, of course, to Frank Sotomayor, who created the basis for what we have now. It's been a very exciting, very learning, humbling and proud time. I would like also to thank my wife and my family, who I don't see quite as often anymore, for their patience. And I can assure that this is just a beginning and there're a lot of things that we shall be able to do in the near future. Because this is going español. Thank you.

Schlosberg: I was just thinking during the last acceptance speech that I am probably the only person in this room who went to work for The Times and actually gets to see my family more than I did in the last three years. Though it isn't that much, it seems like.

When an editor takes on a new assignment, there's generally a vision of something different and wonderful that the person brings to the job. Too often, though, the vision blurs under the constant pounding pressure of deadlines. There are few for whom the vision remains—call it single-mindedness, call it dedication. For those few, one way or another, change is achieved, and the something different and wonderful actually happens.

One of The Times' sections underwent a change last year that was powered by a vision like this, a single-minded dedication to the idea that a respected and successful section could be made even better. And it has been. Our new, hip, savvy, reader-friendly Travel section is a product of the vision, drive and creativity of Leslie Ward. It's taken an enormous amount of hard work and leadership to make it happen. Congratulations, Leslie.

Ward: Call it obsessive-compulsive, I think. A lot of people think it is. Narda is laughing because she knows me. Somebody whispered in my ear that I should get up here and thank all the people who made my laugh easier this year. And the rest of you who didn't, you know what you can do. But there were a lot of people who did that, and a lot of it was by leaving things alone and letting me do what I really was passionate about doing, which was taking a section and changing it to a thing I had wanted to do for about four years.

One of those people was Shelby, who, you'll be surprised to know, really did leave me alone. Narda did too, except when I really needed her to sort of work the system, which she knew how to do better than I, and that was her great support. And then I had the support of all the people in Travel—we're a small staff and we work our tails off, but everybody's been really supportive and trying to figure out what was in my brain, which sometimes I'm not really good at communicating. I try to get them to read my mind. But they've been terrific. Robin Gress and Kim Upton and Jeff Fellenzer and John Anderson and Chris Reynolds and, most of all, a fellow member of the obsessive-compulsive club and the hardest-working and best editor I think I've ever worked with, Carol Powers. If she wasn't there, and if she wasn't there for the last few weeks when I was out ill, I don't know how we would have got the thing out. And also to somebody who makes dinner for me every night, and

whose ideas are a big part of the section, and who makes the best linguine with clam sauce you'll ever eat. That's John Lindsay. Thanks a lot.

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CATEGORY

P

For sustained excellence

by an individual

in any department.

WINNER

BILL BOYARSKY

Coffey: Our final category is P for sustained excellence. Never let it be said that the winner of category P is an old-style reporter. Like the classic martinis he drinks, he's never gone out of style. With no bluster or ceremony, he slips into government meetings and chambers. He listens, watches and makes the connections. Officials who rant and rave on a Monday may not even know he was out there listening ... until they pick up the paper on Tuesday ... and make the acquaintance of the iron typist in the velvet glove.

His knowledge of Los Angeles and California politics is both encyclopedic and Homeric; he can tell stories until the Trojans come home. But once, his prodigious memory nearly got him into deep trouble. During the tenure of Mayor Sam Yorty, The Times uncovered a scandal involving the city's very profitable Harbor Department. The expose led to indictments against some of Yorty's harbor commissioners. A few days later, one of the commissioners was found drowned, floating face-down in the waters of the harbor. His death was ruled accidental. But the police had their doubts. Rumors spread that the commissioner had been silenced before the prosecutors could get to him. Some time later, our winner, in his easygoing fashion, was asking some questions of the mayor of Los Angeles, who was still fuming over those harbor stories. The mayor let fly, telling him just what he thought of a nosy, scheming, bottom-dwelling, scum-sucking press fink. The reporter's eyes widened. He raised his hands. "Oh, no, mayor," he said in mock terror, taking a step backwards. "Please, not the harbor." With his low-key good humor and collegial kindness, Bill Boyarsky has never been a prima donna, but tonight we can acknowledge that he's certainly a star.

Boyarsky: Thank you very much. Thanks to everybody. Thanks to my wonderful wife, Nancy. Thanks to Shelby for giving me a chance to write a column, so that every week is an adventure. Thanks to my editors. The first thank-you goes to Lenny, because she's gonna read my column tomorrow. And thanks to Leo and to Joel, who've been really great editors and who've really let a vicious and vindictive streak that I have flourish. You know, at one point in my career Leo and Joel worked for me. I mean, I was their boss. During that time I was advised often that I should be tougher, meaner, more of a son of a bitch. Well, as I look around, the way things turned out, I'm glad I wasn't. Thank you very much.

Coffey: And thank you again for a terrific evening. Thank you for a wonderful slide show. Our ceremonies are over. Have a good drive home. See you next year.

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